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Self-criticism of the Ideo-
logical Fallacy Pertaining
to Former Business Pursuit

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SELF-CRITICISM OF THE IDEOLOGICAL FALLACY
PERTAINING TO FORMER BUSINESS PURSUITS

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In early January the first class of the Political Studies Section of the Hua-pe^[North China]i University concluded its self-criticism of the ideological fallacy pertaining to former business pursuits. It was a very difficult task. Eighty percent of the class of more than 200 students were former college teachers with an average age of 45. It seemed very painful to them to find out that what they had learned in the past was erroneous; yet on the other hand it seemed to be exciting to them to know that they had finally found a new and correct way for the future.

Although self-criticism of this nature is still a new thing to educational workers and scholars in general, its successful completion is a very profitable experience.

I. PROCESS OF SELF-CRITICISM

Self-criticism of the ideological fallacy which pertained to former business pursuits was conducted in the first class after the completion of a series of studies that lasted more than six months. Before making the self-criticism, they studied current affairs, dialectical and historical materialism, state and revolution, the three documents proclaimed by the People's Political Consultative Conference, etc. They made two general self-criticisms and circulated their reports once. In short, before they conducted self-criticism, with emphasis on the purge of their former business attitude, they had acquired new ways of thinking and new methods, particularly self-criticism.

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Purge of the Sources of Ideological Fallacies

With the exception of one group which was assigned to make field studies in the universities, the entire class was divided into eight groups; politics, economics, philosophy, history, education, law, literature (including writing, foreign languages, document research and management, textual research, rhyme study, linguistic studies, etc.), and natural sciences, (including physics, chemistry, mathematics, medical sciences, geography, astronomy and meteorology, mechanical engineering, and agricultural sciences). Classes started early in December and ended early in January. Students were told repeatedly that the purpose of the study was to rid themselves of ideological fallacies from their very roots. Hence, they were asked to find out in what manner their dominant erroneous ways of thinking controlled their behavior and to use self-criticism as a weapon to extinguish the former fallacious influences.

Self-criticism of ideological fallacies pertaining to former business pursuits was conducted in the following ways: first, we invited experts to give instructive and stimulating reports (for instance, the group on history invited the University President Fan ^{Yen} Wan-lun, the group on education invited University President Cheng Fang-wu) in order to improve the student's ability to make self-criticism, to understand the problems, and to read books concerning their respective fields. (For instance, the literature group studied Chairman Mao's speech in the literature club of Yen-an as its major reference, while the natural sciences group studied Engels' Natural Dialectics.) Second, each student picked up sample material or distinct examples from his former work or occupation and worked

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out an outline for self-criticism. Following the outline, each student discussed his problems with other members in the group before he proceeded to write a full paper. Thus the process of writing one's paper virtually became a process of self-criticism. Third, the paper was circulated within the group so that everyone would be able to raise problems, discuss or make suggestions out of possible inconsistencies in the paper, such as the lack of thoroughness in criticism, obscurity in thinking, prejudice, errors, etc. After the paper was circulated and discussed, each individual student repeated once more the process of self-criticism. Then a general discussion was held by individual groups to draw generalizations about common ideological fallacies and their sources pertaining to that group.

Students Continued to Raise Their Ideology to Higher Level

Every student in the class has felt deeply that completion of the self-criticism of their ideological fallacies owes its success to the educational methods of Marx and Engels, Mao Tze-tung's principles, and the method of self-criticism in general.

In the early period of making self-criticism, there were some difficulties and deviation. For instance, some students were saddened by the thought that what they had learned in the past had turned out to be completely useless. Others could accept criticism only on small matters instead of basic issues; they admitted mistakes in their ways of doing things but declined to realize the basic errors in their thinking. There were some students who flatly admitted that they had been wrong in the past from a theoretical point of view, but

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asserted their correctness in the present without giving details on the process of such a transformation. Some others began their paper by quoting one or two sentences from the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, and Mao Tze-tung; wrote down their own viewpoints and jumped to the conclusion that they were wrong since their viewpoints did not conform to the sentences, as quoted. Nevertheless, student ideology continued to improve in the course of self-criticism. Those who did not realize their shortcomings in the beginning stages of self-criticism were able to do so as a result of repeated discussions with others; in the later stage, they accepted criticism and suggestions without any reservation. Thinking that the criticism and suggestions might be too much for the person involved, some students were rather hesitant to utter them in the meeting, but later they found out to their surprise that the person whom they criticized accepted their suggestions without reservation. The month when self-criticism was being conducted was without precedent, a busy one. Groups held individual meetings here and there in the roomy dormitory. By night everyone was so busy writing his paper that only the scratching of pens could be heard. One student told me that during that month he was even thinking at bedtime or while walking of "how to analyze myself more deeply." Many students accepted other's suggestions and accordingly made five or six corrections on their paper. They criticized themselves frankly, accepted others suggestions objectively, and in the meantime, criticized others with a solemn and responsible attitude. In that month many students made rapid progress.

After the self-criticism of ideological fallacies pertaining to former business pursuits had ended, many students said easily that

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"we have finally left an old burden behind us." On New Year's Day they played the Chinese drums and danced the Yang-ko [peasant dance] like young folks.

II. SOURCES OF IDEOLOGICAL FALLACIES PERTAINING TO FORMER BUSINESS PURSUITS

The problem of ideological fallacy is virtually a problem of what our position is in the class society. It is a problem of a philosophy of life, of a world view, and of ways of thinking.

The Purge of the Fallacious Attitudes:

"Neutrality of Class," "Neutrality of Politics."

Each individual group in the class thoroughly criticized the ideological fallacies common to his business pursuit such as "neutrality of class" and "neutrality of politics." Such neutral attitudes represented the landlord, bourgeoisie, and lower middle class philosophy of life. The group on politics admitted that they were wrong in believing that if political affairs were left to be managed by good men, the government would be efficient and the nation would be stronger, for they realized now that such a trust, if given to the bourgeoisie class would only deepen the suffering of the people and mislead the revolution. The group on philosophy conceded that most of them formerly believed in idealism and dualism mainly because of their sociological and educational background. In fact, they believed that the bourgeoisie class made the philosophy more mysterious and skeptical in order to continue their trickery. And because they had identified themselves with the exploiting class in the past, they had been quite indifferent to the facts of life in

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the broad material world.

Why did many students in the literature group fail to realize the possibility of improving the quality of literature on the basis of popularization, and why did they still believe in the inherent quality of beauty rather than in its class nature. Why did students in the law group contend that equality before the law could be achieved even in the former old society, and believe in the former old society, and believe in the righteousness of "avenging death with death," and of debt payment in the former society? Why had students in the history group failed to see class struggles, the people's history? Why had they interpreted historical events by attributing them to the personal failure of the ancient kings and emperors? Why was it that the people who studied history could not understand the real meaning of history? People failed to understand the above-mentioned problems because they stood side by side with the bourgeois class and kept its attitude toward social problems.

Students in the education group wrote of themselves: "many of us formerly believed that education could be completely independent of politics as long as it could bring up useful citizens for the society. Some of us went so far as to say that we would treat fellow teachers nicely, insofar as they stayed on their teaching job, regardless of whether they believe in either the Three People's Principles of socialism. Some others among us once wondered what we educational workers had to do with the ruling class. One person who taught the history of Chinese literature was once an adherent of the slogan "freedom of academic studies, independence for education, all political parties retreat from schools" because he believed that the

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educational system would be doing well once it had established independence from the reactionary party." In conclusion they said that they were all wrong because they were either consciously or unconsciously holding the banner of neutrality, yet on the other hand, they looked to the ruling class for support. A student who has spent more than twenty years in textual studies and who claimed to be neutral admitted that what he did in the past was merely to please the rulers with false prophets.

The group on natural sciences criticized their "neutrality of class" and "neutrality of politics," as attitudes of looking at things merely from the standpoint of their technical profession. They frankly admitted that virtually they served only the interests of the ruling class. Natural sciences cannot keep aloof in a class society, especially when it is controlled by a particular class. The foreign language group pointed out that a foreign language is essentially a medium of cultural exchange, but when it was pursued with an erroneous attitude, it became an instrument by which poisonous bourgeois culture was introduced to students. Thus it is the political stand of the language students that determines the social implication of learning a foreign language. Hence, for the proletariat class to study the Russian language with the intention of absorbing the Russians' experience in national reconstruction and learning revolutionary theory is quite different in nature from the study of the Russian language with the intention of sabotaging the international front for world peace.

The Purge of the Fallacious Ways of Thinking and the
Linking of Theory with Practice.

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Each group further criticized the idealism, the metaphysics, the mistakes in failing to understand the law of social development and the failure to link theory with practice.

A student in the group on philosophy realized how funny it was that he had preached integration of teaching and studying yet at the same time had propagated the mysterious, idealistic religious philosophy. One teacher of literature said with bitterness that although he had written and spoken much to expose the darkness and to praise the daylight, he has found himself getting nowhere as if what he had done was only for giving courage to those who have been marching toward progress.

The group on natural sciences found out that in the past they pursued isolated and static studies and separated social sciences from natural sciences. When they could not solve problems, they retreated into the belief that the world is a riddle and their problems are but myths. Many of them believed the laws of physics, chemistry, and mathematics were but inventions of a genius and that they owed nothing to the working people, or in other words, that laws are unchangeable and eternal truth. They now realize fully that natural sciences are products of the development of production forces and production relations. It is labor, not genius, that create the natural sciences. Some students in the class also said that they reconstructed the bourgeois idealism or totally copied alien culture, then self-deceitfully preached them to students without making any reference to the actual circumstances in China. A person who taught horticulture asserted that despite the fact that he lectured on the gardening of carrots, he exclusively mentioned carrots of foreign

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origin; he never knew about the native carrot.

Throughout the self-criticism students whose major fields are horticulture and biology have studied and accepted the theories of Michurin and Lysenko and have criticized the fallacies of the idealistic theories of Morgan, Mendel, and Weismann. They all agreed that as scientists, they should make greater efforts to study the theories of Marx and Engels and Mao Tze-tung's principles, be vigorously critical of the idealistic implications of certain theories in the field of natural sciences, emphasize the integration of theory and practice, visualize the close relationship between natural and social sciences, and improve the student's understanding of materialism.

The Remaining Task of Self Criticism is to be Accomplished Through Actual Practice.

Within one month self-criticism has purged or liquidated the major ideological fallacies that existed in the minds of these 200 students. It has liquidated the ideologies that are of imperialistic, even fascist origin, as well as those that pertain to the bourgeoisie, feudalism, and the lower middle classes. A great change, or rather, a great progress, has taken place. In fact, during the period of one month, we have walked the journey of a century.

However, as pointed out by individual groups, such self-criticism is but the first step in applying our revolutionary theories to the real world. It shows us what shall be criticized and given up and what course of action shall be taken. In short, it gives us new views toward our business pursuits. Nevertheless, it is but a

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beginning toward a further purge of the grave ideological fallacies that still pertain to former business pursuits. One student feels that he has been awakened because he knows that he was wrong in the past when he only taught pupils the content of books, but without principles and purposes. But he has opened only one window, for another window has yet to be opened by means of active physical participation in order to advance toward the bright future.

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